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RHEHAAA/NATIONAL SECURITY COUNCIL WASHINGTON DC PRIORITY
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SUBJECT: PRESIDENT-ELECT LAUNCHES NATIONAL DIALOGUE

¶11. (SBU) Summary: President-elect Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo presided over a meeting on December 14 with representatives of many sectors of Honduran society, following up on his announced intention to create a dialogue with the Honduran people in order for his administration to be an inclusive one. Lobo believes his national dialogue will help unify the Honduran people, who have been deeply polarized by the country's political crisis. In addition, it could help give a voice to many Hondurans who feel they have been excluded for too long from their country's decision-making process.
End Summary.

¶12. (U) President-elect Porfirio "Pepe" Lobo launched a national dialogue on December 14. Lobo and his advisors met in a Tegucigalpa hotel with representatives of professional and business organizations, religious groups, unions, and cooperatives. The anti-coup pro-Zelaya movement known as the "resistance" was invited, but did not attend. According to press reports, more than 60 persons spoke at the event. The press reported that Lobo said his government will be marked by austerity and the lack of tolerance for corruption.

¶13. (U) According to Lobo, the purpose of the event was to create a dialogue with the Honduran people and establish a permanent relationship and channel of communication between the nation's president and its citizens. Lobo has said that he wants to govern on behalf of all Hondurans and his goal is for his administration to be inclusive of all sectors of Honduran society. He also believes that a national dialogue will help repair the damage caused by the political crisis of the last several months. Lobo wants to encourage direct participation by those who in the past have been excluded from public and political decision-making. The Lobo administration plans for this to be the first of several meetings and for this dialogue to continue throughout its four-year term, but especially during the first months of its term of office.

¶14. (U) The press reported that crime, frequent strikes by teachers, the lack of land titles, and the recurring flooding of the nation's capital were issues brought to Lobo's attention by those who took the floor at the event. The press said that business groups called for strengthening of innovation and technology in the sector and for capacity building for the labor force. The agricultural sector reportedly called for technical assistance and technology to improve planting and harvesting. According to the press, the organizations present agreed to reach out to the most excluded members of society and gather their concerns and transmit them to the Lobo government.

15. (SBU) Comment: Lobo's launch of a national dialogue is a sure sign that his administration is committed to listen to the people and seek to unify a badly divided nation. Many Hondurans feel marginalized, left out, and unable to have an impact on public sector decisions that affect their everyday lives. The situation has been worsened by anxiety created by the political crisis. Lobo's national dialogue is an excellent step towards addressing these concerns.

LLORENS